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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR WILLIAMS/SHAMPAINE/BELGRADE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS; TREASURY FOR NUGENT/HIRSON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ETRD ECON PREL KWBG IS

SUBJECT: NEW TARQUMIYA CROSSING FACILITY

REF: JERUSALEM 607

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On April 18, USAID, USSC, and Econoffs walked through the new Tarqumiya crossing facility under construction 300 meters inside the West Bank. The new commercial crossing terminal will use a container scanner that will allow containers to be transferred between Palestinian and Israeli vehicles. The crossing includes lanes for Israeli-plated vehicles, a crucial feature for Hebron businesses, and a new passenger checkpoint modeled on the Qalandia crossing. End Summary.

New Facility Will Use USAID-funded Scanners and Infrastructure

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¶2. (SBU) On April 18, USAID, USSC, and Econoffs walked through the new crossing facility under construction 300 meters inside the West Bank near the Palestinian town of Tarqumiya. The crossing is the closest one to Hebron and is the primary commercial crossing in the southern West Bank. When complete in several months' time, the new commercial crossing facility will include a mobile scanner for containers, pallet scanners, a back-to-back transfer platform for small trucks, and a large lot for container exchanges between Palestinian and Israeli trucks. USAID is financing a mobile scanner, one pallet scanner, and associated infrastructure and installation costs. Tarqumiya will also have a new passenger checkpoint, capable of processing 2,000 people per day and modeled on the Qalandia crossing.

¶3. (SBU) All Palestinian-plated trucks carrying exports to Israel, except for small trucks, will be scanned by a mobile scanner with the capacity of 150 trucks per day, according to USAID. Small trucks will transfer their cargo on an elevated platform where manual or K-9 inspection will occur. After scanning, trucks needing a secondary check would move to one of two enclosed "rooms" where cargo would be manually or K-9 inspected or sent through a pallet scanner. Once the scanning process is complete, trucks would move to a large lot for "side-by-side transfers," where containers or pallets would be moved from Palestinian vehicles to Israeli vehicles via cranes or forklifts.

¶4. (SBU) Aggregates will be transferred in a separate area in the "dump-and-shovel" method, and petroleum products will transfer between trucks via pipes through a barrier. Plans eventually call for petroleum products to flow between the two sides through a system of underground pipes.

Through Lanes for Israeli-Plated Vehicles

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¶5. (SBU) Hebron business owners have previously told Econoffs that large marble blocks, a major local export, currently transit Tarqumiya on yellow-plated Israeli vehicles without inspection (reftel). The new facility includes lanes for Israeli-plated vehicles, which would accommodate these shipments.

WALLES